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## Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Post:** Sarajevo

### EU to Allow Export of Potatoes from BiH

**Report Categories:**

Potatoes and Potato Products

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**Report Highlights:**

Following the EU's Food and Veterinary Office inspection visit in March/April 2014, the European Commission's Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed determined BiH's data was sufficient to prepare a Regulation declaring BiH free from potato ring rot. This will allow BiH to export potatoes to the EU market. BiH produces annually 350,000 metric tons (MT) of potatoes, but only exported in 2014 approximately 1,900 MT valued at USD\$600,000 to Montenegro, Norway and Serbia. BiH potato farmers hope they'll be able to increase exports by supplying early potatoes to Croatia this year. Meanwhile BiH imported 16,300 MT of potatoes, valued at \$6.2 million, mainly from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

## **General Information:**

On March 31, 2015 the European Commission (EC) reported that the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, the body responsible for food safety, evaluated positively BiH's data and will prepare a Regulation declaring BiH free from potato ring rot. Once adopted BiH will be able to export potatoes to the EU. The Delegation of the EU to BiH/EU Special Representative's Office stressed that "the potato sector is an example where BiH demonstrated efficient controls and surveillance systems, and functional coordination, with staff and authorities working as a team across institutions. This is a positive example to be followed in other areas, such as the preparations for export of dairy products."

The EU's Phytosanitary Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) carried out an inspection mission March 24 - April 4, 2014, that began with an introductory call on BiH's Plant Health Administration (PHA), the central competent authority for phytosanitary issues. The mission also met with the Entity Agricultural Ministries and Inspectorates inspected certain phyto – laboratories and visited potato producers and distributors in Sarajevo, Mostar, Capljina, Glamoc and the Banja Luka region. At the time of the mission's visit, the country was in the third year of implementing a national monitoring program for quarantine pests that affect potatoes. The EU Draft Potato Inspection Report released on May 28, 2014, had five recommendations which related to BiH's plant health authorities increasing the sampling of potatoes, ensuring that the seed registration legislation more closely aligns with the corresponding EU legislation, and improving the overall quality of the laboratory controls. BiH's PHA worked with the Entity authorities to develop an action plan and implemented it according to the FVO recommendations.

BiH has 37,000 hectares of planted area that produce approximately 350,000 metric tons (MT) of potatoes. In 2013, BiH exported 3,700 MT of potatoes valued at US\$1.7 million (KM 3.05 million) with 80 percent being destined for Croatia and Montenegro, consisting mainly of early potatoes from Herzegovina. In 2014, potatoes exports dropped significantly to only 1,900 MT valued at \$600,000 (KM 1.03 million), destined mainly for Montenegro, Serbia, and Norway. The decline in exports was because early potatoes from Herzegovina couldn't access the Croatian market once that country joined the European Union on July 1, 2013. In 2014, BiH imported close to \$6.20 million (KM 11 million) worth of potatoes, mainly from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.